

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An information input apparatus, comprising:
- an imaging device that forms digital images of a subject;
  - a sound recording device that records sounds in a state of recording mode;
  - a storage medium that stores at least one of the digital images formed by the imaging device and the sounds input by the sound recording device;
  - a release switch that initiates a ~~predetermined~~ process of forming the digital images by said imaging device;
  - a sound effect output device that outputs a preset sound effect when the release switch is operated; and
  - a control device that ~~controls at least one of~~ connects to the sound recording device, the storage medium, ~~and a sound playback device~~ and the sound effect output device;
- wherein while in the recording mode, the control device controls the sound effect output device to prevent at least one of recording, storing, and outputting of a the preset sound effect that was output during a recording mode so that the preset sound effect will not be output with the sounds that were recorded by the sound recording device when the release switch initiated initiates the predetermined process of forming the digital images.
2. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
- a view finder through which the subject can be observed; and
  - an information output device that outputs visual information within the viewfinder, wherein the ~~predetermined process is an image process that forms at least one image of the subject using the imaging device and also~~ stores the at least one image in the

storage medium, wherein the control device further controls the information output device to output a visual release switch indication when the release switch is operated.

3. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the preset sound effect is a shutter sound effect, wherein the storage medium stores a plurality of types of the shutter sound effect, and wherein the sound effect output device outputs one of the plurality of types of shutter sound effect when the release switch is operated.

4. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the storage medium stores the images and the sounds together.

5. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a setting device that sets a photographic environment, wherein when the release switch is operated the sound effect output device further outputs sound effects based on the photographic environment set by the setting device.

6. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 5, wherein the setting device is a compression device that compresses the images formed by the imaging device at a selected one of a plurality of compression rates.

7. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 6, wherein a frequency of the sound effects output by the sound effect output device is changed based on the selected compression rate.

8. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 6, wherein the setting device further sets an information input apparatus operating mode, wherein the sound effect output device outputs the sound effects based on the operation mode set by the setting device.

9. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 8, further comprising a changing device that changes the sound effects corresponding to the operation mode.

10. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sound playback device silences all or part of the preset sound effect when the preset sound effect is included in the sound stored by the storage medium.

11. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a selection device that selects whether to remove the preset sound effect included in the sounds output by the sound playback device, wherein a sound removing device silences all or part of the preset sound effect when removing the sound effect is selected by the selection device.

12. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 10 further comprising a deleting device that deletes all or part of the preset sound effect from the sounds output by the sound playback device when the preset sound effect was included in the sounds that the sound recording device records.

13. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the information input apparatus includes the sound playback device that outputs the sounds stored in the storage medium, and wherein the sound effect output device is controlled by the control device to selectively output a preset sound effect having a frequency incapable of being recorded by the sound recording device, incapable of being stored by the storage medium, or incapable of being played back by the sound playback device.

14. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a display that displays the images formed by the imaging device and the images stored by the storage medium.

15. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 1, further comprising an illumination device that illuminates the subject with light.

16. (Currently Amended) An information input apparatus, comprising:  
imaging means for forming digital images of a subject;

sound recording means for inputting sounds in a state of recording mode;

storage means for storing the digital images formed by the imaging means and the sounds input by the sound recording means;

indicating means for indicating start of a ~~predetermined~~ process of forming the digital images by said imaging means;

sound effect output means for outputting preset sound effects when the indicating means indicates the ~~predetermined~~ process of forming the digital images is started; and

control means ~~for controlling at least one of~~ connected to the sound recording means, the storage means, and ~~a sound playback means and the sound effect output means~~;

wherein while in the recording mode, the control means controls the sound effect output means to prevent at least one of recording, storing and outputting of a the preset sound effects effect that was output during a recording mode, wherein the preset sound effects will not be output with the sounds that were input by the sound recording means when the predetermined process of forming digital images is started.

17. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

observation means for observing the subject; and

information output means for outputting visual information within the observation means, wherein the indicating means is a release button, wherein the ~~predetermined~~ process also is an image recording process that stores the images formed by the imaging means in the storage means, wherein the control means controls the information output means to output a visual release button indication when the ~~predetermined~~ process is started.

18. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 16, further comprising setting means for setting one compression rate among a plurality of compression rates for the images formed by the imaging means, wherein a frequency of the preset sound effects corresponds to the compression rate set by the setting means.

19. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 18, wherein the setting means further sets an information input apparatus operating mode, wherein the preset sound effects correspond to the operating mode set by the setting means.

20. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 16, wherein the information input apparatus includes the sound playback means for playback of the sounds stored in the storage means; and further comprising:

sound silencing means for silencing all or part of the preset sound effects when the preset sound effects are included in the sounds stored by the storage means.


21. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 20, further comprising selecting means for selecting whether the preset sound effects included in the sounds played back by the sound playback means are silenced, wherein the sound silencing means silences all of part of the preset sound effects when silencing the sound effects is selected by the selecting means.

22. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 20, further comprising deleting means for deleting all or part of the preset sound effects from the sounds input by the sound recording means.

23. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 16, wherein the sound effect output means selects and outputs a preset sound effect with a frequency incapable of being input by the sound recording means, incapable of being stored by the storage means, or incapable of being played back by the sound playback means.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling an information input apparatus, comprising:

- forming digital images of a subject using an imaging device;
- performing sound recording of sounds occurring near the information input apparatus using a sound recording device in a state of recording mode;
- storing the digital images formed by the imaging device and the sounds recorded by the sound recording device in a storage medium;
- operating a release switch to initiate a ~~predetermined~~ process of forming the digital images by said imaging device;
- outputting a sound effect when the ~~predetermined-image forming~~ process is initiated; and
- controlling ~~at least one of recording, storing and outputting of the sound effect during a recording mode so that~~ ; wherein while in the recording mode, preventing outputting the sound effect that was output during the recording mode will not be output with the sounds that were recorded when the predetermined-process of forming the digital images initiated-initiates the sound effect.



25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

- observing the subject through a viewfinder; and
- outputting visual information within the viewfinder, wherein the ~~predetermined-process~~ also is an image recording process that stores the images formed by the imaging device in the storage medium, wherein the visual information is a release switch operation indication when the release switch is operated.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising setting the photographic environment with a setting device, wherein the sound effect outputting step outputs the sound effect based on the photographic environment set by the setting device.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the setting step sets an information input apparatus operating mode and the outputting step outputs the sound effect based on the operation mode set by the setting device.

28. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising:  
playing back the sounds stored in the storage medium with a speaker; and  
silencing the sound effect when the sound effect is included in the sounds recorded by the sound recording device.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the silencing step comprises deleting the sound effect from the sounds when the sound effect is included in the sounds recorded by the sound recording device.

30. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising playing back the sounds stored in the storage medium with a speaker, wherein the sound outputting step with the sounds input by the sound recording means, includes selecting and outputting a sound effect using a frequency outside a frequency range of the sound recording device, the storage medium or the speaker.

31. (Previously Added) The information input apparatus of claim 1, where the preset sound effect is customizable.

32.-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Previously Added) The information input apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a customizable means for customizing the preset sound effect.

37.-40. (Cancelled)

41. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising customizing the preset sound effect.

42.-45. (Cancelled)

46. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 32) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the control device includes a device that prevents the output of frequencies that are lower or higher than the common voice frequency.

47. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 33) The information input apparatus of claim 46, where the device is a filter.

48. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 34) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the control device includes a device that prevents recordation of the preset sound effect by use of a reverse phase of the preset sound effect phase.

49. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 35) The information input apparatus of claim 48, where the device is an inverter.

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50. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 37) The information input apparatus of claim 16, wherein the control means includes prevention means for preventing the output of frequencies that are lower or higher than the common voice frequency.

51. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 38) The information input apparatus of claim 50, wherein the prevention means includes a filter.

52. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 39) The information input apparatus of claim 16, wherein the control means includes means for preventing the recordation of the preset sound effect by use of a reverse phase of the preset sound effect phase.

53. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 40) The information input apparatus of claim 52, where the prevention means includes an inverter.

54. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 42) The method of claim 24, wherein the controlling step includes preventing the output of frequencies that are lower or higher than the common voice frequency.



55. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 43) The method of claim 54, wherein the preventing the output of frequencies that are lower or higher than the common voice frequency comprises filtering out such frequencies.

56. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 44) The method of claim 24, wherein the controlling step includes using a reverse phase of a phase of the preset sound effect to prevent the recordation of the preset sound effect.

57. (Reinstated - Formerly Claim 45) The method of claim 56 where the using a reverse phase of the phase of the preset sound effect comprises inverting the phase of the preset sound effect.

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